REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Examiner is thanked for extending the courtesy of a personal interview with Applicant's representative on June 22, 2004.

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. Currently, claims 1-3 and 5-9 are pending in this application.

The rejection of claims 1-3 and 5-9 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly made "obvious" based on Ohashi et al (U.S. '094, hereinafter "Ohashi") in view of Sugita et al (U.S. '603, hereinafter "Sugita") is respectfully traversed.
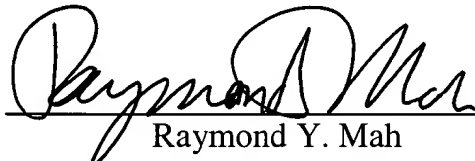
In order to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, all of the claimed limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of Ohashi and Sugita fails to teach or suggest all of the claimed limitations. For example, the combination fails to teach or suggest "wherein the timer setting means monitors an interval of executing the monitor program and sets the new time count when that interval is within a predetermined time range having a beginning time and an end time point," as required by independent claim 1 and its dependents. Similarly, the combination fails to teach or suggest, inter alia, checking by a first computer whether a time counted is within a predetermined time range having a beginning time point and an end time point, and determining by the first microcomputer an abnormality of a monitor program execution when the time counted is outside the predetermined time range, as required by independent claim 6 and its dependents.

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In Ohashi, two microcomputers 4 and 6 monitor each other and a watch-dog circuit abnormality detection program causes a fail-safe action to be taken if any abnormality of the microcomputer 4 or the abnormality detection program is found. In Sugita, a CPU is reset if a timer circuit is not refreshed. Neither reference teaches setting a new time count on a condition that a monitor program execution interval is within a predetermined time range having a beginning time point and an end time point. Therefore, the present invention would not have been taught or suggested even if the two applied references were combined.

Accordingly, this entire application is now believed to be in allowable condition and a formal Notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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